Incorporation of the EDF in the EC budget

1994/2139(INI) - 22/06/1995

The committee amended and then adopted the report by Mr Jean BAGGIONI (RDE, F) in which it reiterated the European Parliament's position on including the EDF in the Union budget. The committee restated the European Parliament's position (unchanged since 1973) that the EDF should be included in the budget and stressed that the Treaty required all income and expenditure to be entered in the EU budget. It deplored the fact that the Council had failed to examine if and how the EDF could be included in the budget from 1995 onwards, despite its commitment to do so in the 1993 interinstitutional agreement. It stressed that, when it drew up the budget, the budgetary authority should have an overall view of all the resources allocated to development policy and reminded the Council of the principles of coherent action in the area of external action, security, the economy and development. It also reminded the Council that, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, development policy, by its very nature and dimension, should be implemented at Community level and should be extended to include new parameters such as a stronger environmental policy, a training policy and policies to promote women and safeguard cultural identities. The Committee on Budgets expressly stated that the inclusion of the EDF in the EU budget would not reduce the Union's financial commitment to ACP and other third countries or imply any weakening of the Lomé Convention. It felt that the ACP countries would benefit from this move because it would facilitate regular budgetary management and multiannual project planning. In the committee's view, including the EDF in the budget would neither increase the overall cost to the Member States nor, in the medium term, change the individual costs to the Member States. It felt that transitional arrangements (lasting a maximum of 5 years) would be needed until funding expenditure was replaced by recourse to on own resources. The Committee on Budgets called on the Commission to submit proposals on revised financial perspectives, an amended financial regulation and amendments to the provisions of the Lomé Convention with a view to including the EDF (the expenditure of which qualifies as non-compulsory) into the budget. COMITOLOGY- BUDGETARY ASPECTS: the European Parliament adopted an amendment making provision to place the appropriations relating to lines A-2510 and A-2511 (funding for various committees) in reserve when the 1995 budget was adopted on 15 December 1994. The sum in question totalled some ECU 17.5 million and was intended to cover the operating expenses of approximately 430 committees (regulatory, management and advisory, in addition to the committees provided for in specific research programmes) involved in the procedure of drawing up Community acts. Having received an initial Commission report on the working of these committees, the Committee on Budgets decided in February 1995 to release almost half the appropriations in reserve and to decide on whether to remit the remaining appropriations once an investigation into this question had been completed. It called for all the parliamentary committees involved in legislative work to help with the investigation by summarizing their cooperation to date with the committees in question. The European Parliament's battle over comitology is not a new issue. It has in fact on several occasions lodged its objections to the role of these committees which, it feels, stretch the rules of transparency and democracy and represent a violation of the Treaty by the Commission as regards executive powers (Article 205). In fact, because these committees are made up of non-elected civil servants from national ministries and do not meet in public, the European Parliament is deprived of its rights of democratic scrutiny of Community acts, the will of the "legislator" or budgetary authority is distorted and the Treaty is violated as regards its powers as co-legislator with the Council under the codecision procedure. In Parliament's opinion, neither the 1987 PLUMB/DELORS agreement on the transparency of committee activities nor the "modus vivendi" approved in February 1995 on committees involved in codecision procedures alone had brought about a satisfactory solution overall, which was why the Committee on Budgets had considered a working document by its general rapporteur on the 1995 budget, Mr. Terence WYNN (PSE, UK), taking stock of comitology problems, evaluating the difficulties encountered and outlining solutions in a bid to increase transparency in and democratic scrutiny of the working of these committees. The Committee on Budgets called on the Commission for more information and a detailed written position on the rapporteur's analysis in order to examine the question of payments of appropriations and follow up the Commission's request for appropriations

earmarked for operating committees which were still blocked to be released. The Committee on Budgets would be in a position to state its views on the payment of appropriations at its meeting on 18 and 19 July 1995. It also hoped that the political groups would address the question so that the European Parliament as a whole could state its position on comitology after the recess.